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ABSTRACT

A study examined the impact of state comprehensive cooperative agreements on vocational education programs for handicapped youth. During the study, 45 local educational agencies operating in 17 states with comprehensive cooperative state agreements were asked to rate the degree of influence that the state agreement had on such programming areas as physical access, program access, recruitment, placement, special services, Individualized Education Program (IEP) preparation, transportation, pooling of resources, and other areas. Based on data obtained from 44 completed surveys, the researchers determined that state-level comprehensive cooperative agreements do have a significant and positive influence on the delivery of local vocational education programs for handicapped youth. Included among the areas that were most affected by such state agreements were inservice teacher training programs for staffs, improvement and accommodation in curricula and related program strategies, and sharing of resources and data. In addition, the researchers found that those comprehensive agreements having minimum details were perceived as having the most impact. Recommendations were made calling for continued development of comprehensive cooperative agreements. (MN)

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IMPACT OF STATE COMPREHENSIVE COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS ON LOCAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR HANDICAPPED YOUTH

BY

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A Project for the
"Consortium for Improved Services
to Handicapped Youth"

Consortium Organizations:

Lt. Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Institute
Maryland Catholic Conference-Research Development Center
National Advisory Council on Vocational Education
President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped

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April 1983

ED 366643

July 29, 1983

Dear Reader:

The National Advisory Council on Vocational Education and the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped invite you to review the attached study on the "Impact of State Comprehensive Cooperative Agreements."

We believe there is much useful information in this study about improving the delivery system to handicapped students through cooperative agreements.

Please feel free to disseminate this document to your colleagues.

Sincerely,

Edward D. Miller
Chairman, National Advisory Council
on Vocational Education

Harold Russell
Chairman, President's
Committee on Employment
of the Handicapped

RB/vs
attachment

ED366643

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study was undertaken in order to help answer the question, "To what degree have state level comprehensive cooperative agreements involving special education, vocational education and vocational rehabilitation influenced the delivery of local level services to handicapped youth enrolled in vocational education?" Forty-five local education agencies operating in 17 states with comprehensive cooperative state agreements were asked to rate the degree of influence the state agreement had on such vital programming areas as; physical access, program access, recruitment, placement, special services, IEP preparation, transportation, pooling of resources and other areas.

Moderate and positive influence, as defined by the study's methodology, was experienced in the following areas 1. development of inservice training programs for secondary special education and vocational education teachers; 2. implementation of the IEP (individualized educatio program) for handicapped students in vocational education; 3. the sharing of records and data among the three service agencies (special education, vocational education and vocational rehabilitation); 4. the sharing of money and other resources (including equipment, materials, personnel, facilities in order to help insure the delivery of appropriate prevocational and vocational instruction to handicapped students; 5. inservice training programs designed to cross train personnel of the three related service agencies in each other's specialty; and, 6. the development of career related instructional objectives for handicapped students in special education programs.

The study also attempted to determine if different types of state level cooperative agreements made a difference to local programs and in which programming areas. The less complicated state cooperative agreements, those with minimal detail, seemed to influence the greatest number of programming areas. The more complicated or sophisticated state level cooperative agreements influenced a lesser number of areas; but, the areas influenced were the advanced programming areas. This finding suggests that in the beginning a simple agreement is preferable and as progress is made a more comprehensive state level cooperative agreement should be pursued.

Lastly, when local education agencies with and without local cooperative agreements were studied, those with local agreements had more areas influenced by a ratio of about 5 to 1. Hence, the evidence in favor of local agreements in conjunction with state level cooperative agreements is overwhelming.

In summary the study found that state level comprehensive cooperative agreements do have a significant and positive influence on the delivery of local vocational education programs to handicapped youth.

IMPACT OF STATE COMPREHENSIVE COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS ON LOCAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR HANDICAPPED YOUTH

by

Paul Hippolitus
Ralph Bregman

INTRODUCTION

Interagency cooperation is not a new concept. Both research and experience are availiable which illustrate the value of related services agencies cooperating in the delivery of human service programs.

In the area of delivering vocational education programs to handicapped youth, however, the implementation of this management tool is relatively new. According to the most current research, 28 states and the District of Columbia enjoy the existence of state level interagency agreements among special education, vocational rehabilitation and vocational education. But for a few exceptions, all of these agreements have been written during the period of 1978 to 1980.

It's important to note some of the reasons why interagency cooperation and the formal written agreement have become so actively pursued in this field during the last four years. In many respects, the underlying inspiration behind this movement has been federal legislation. Federal legislation which has clarified the needs and rights of handicapped young people for an appropriate education. These laws are: "The Education for All the Handicapped Children Act" (P.L. 94-142), "Vocational Education Amendments" (P.L. 94-482), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

The net effect of these laws has been to help make clear the obligation public education and rehabilitation programs have towards meeting the vocational needs of handicapped youth.

Add to these developments the impact of longstanding "hire the handicapped" compaigns and national affirmative action programs to hire qualified handicapped workers and we can see how our society is maturing with respect to the subject of preparing for work and employing handicapped young people.

The overall impact of these efforts has been to create both a significant advancement in the state of the art and higher expectation levels among educators, handicapped people, their parents and employers. It is within this context that more meaningful vocational or occupational education programs are being encouraged in all parts of the country.

More recently, another important influence has appeared on the scene which has added to the attractiveness of interagency agreements. And, it may prove to be as compelling as the federal laws and programs mentioned above. It's the reality of reduced resources available to pursue human service programs. No longer can we afford not to cooperate. Interagency cooperation appears to offer great promise to all the partners as a cost saving tool.

As a result of these forces, special education, vocational education and vocational rehabilitation have begun to move toward the concept of interagency cooperation as a creative way to meet the challenges precipitated by change and progress.

PURPOSE

This paper is a report of a study undertaken by a group calling itself the Consortium for Improved Services to Handicapped Youth. The Consortium was an ad hoc grouping of four organizations established in 1981, solely for the purpose of engaging in this research effort. The National Advisory Council on Vocational Education initiated this effort. The organizational members of the group were, Lt. Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Institute, Maryland Catholic Conference-Research Development Center, National Advisory Council on Vocational Education and the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped.

The purpose of the study reported in this paper was to determine to what degree and in which areas existing state cooperative agreements impacted upon the delivery of local vocational or occupational education programs for handicapped youth. In other words, the Consortium attempted to answer the question, "Have State level interagency cooperative agreements among special education, vocational education and vocational rehabilitation had a positive and measurable influence on actual programs?" And, "If so, in which areas was this influence the greatest?"

A considerable amount of federal and state resources have been allocated to the development and implementation of state level cooperative agreements. This study, it was hoped, will serve to clarify the utility of interagency cooperative agreements.

METHODOLOGY

With the purpose of the study in mind, the Consortium began this effort by reviewing the literature to determine to what extent research had already been undertaken in this area. It was discovered that three significant national studies had been undertaken in the general subject area; but, after consulting with each study's principle investigator, it was learned that none of these prior efforts had attempted to determine the impact that state interagency cooperative agreements have had at the local level. For example, the Phelps study looked at the process and content of state agreements. The Tindall study resulted in a document offering a blueprint on "how to" establish such agreements at the state and

local level. And, the Bensburg study showcased examples of exemplary programs operating in a dozen or more states (See Reference section, page 28). But, nobody had yet tried to measure the degree of influence or impact that state agreements were having at the local level.

Next, after discussion and consultation, a draft survey instrument was prepared. Its purpose was to itemize the critical areas affecting the handicapped student's access to vocational instructional programs in order to measure which areas or aspects were influenced positively by the state cooperative agreement. Areas for which questions were prepared included: admissions, screening, testing, physical access, transportation, placement, teacher training and curriculum. The draft survey instrument was finalized with input from representatives from all three program areas (special education, vocational education and vocational rehabilitation). Next, it was reviewed and field tested with the Maryland State Education Agency, a Maryland local education agency and a panel of experts. After this, a final survey form was prepared.

According to the literature there are currently 29 states (28 states and the District of Columbia) with cooperative agreements. During the Consortium's review of these 29 agreements, it became obvious that some were more detailed and involved than others. Since the purpose of the survey was to see if and to what degree a comprehensive state interagency agreement has influence local programming, only 17 of the 29 states were selected for this study. The 12 states omitted had agreements that seemed to the Consortium to be not comprehensive. That is, the three agencies were either not cosigners of the agreement or there was no clear indication in the agreement for cooperation.

With the sample decided, the 17 state education agencies were contacted and asked to nominate three local education agencies which, in their opinion, were effectively operating vocational or occupational education programs for handicapped youth. An assumption was made that only a local program effectively serving handicapped young people could report any positive influence from the state level.

Forty-seven local education agencies were identified by the state education agencies in the 17 states. These became the study group. Each local education agency was then contacted by telephone and invited to participate on a voluntary basis in this study. All agreed to take part. Forty-four completed surveys were received and constitute the basis for this study's findings.

The survey process developed by the Consortium for this study began with the sending of an initial or basic survey form to all the local education agencies who agree to participate. When completed survey forms were received, a follow-up survey was went only to those local education agencies who indicated, via the initial survey form, that in one or more programming areas they experienced a "high" degree of influence from the state level cooperative agreement. The purpose of the follow-up survey was to attempt to document, in a narrative way, reasons why a "high" level of influence was experienced.

Presentation of Data

The findings from the initial survey are presented in the matrix below. In the left hand column labeled "ITEM" are listed the 34 areas (for a total of 42 items) for which data was sought. In the next column, labeled "TOTAL" are the figures which represent the computed average response for all of the 44 respondents to each individual "ITEM" or programming area. In the survey, if a respondent indicated that the State Cooperative Agreement (SCA) had no influence on a particular "ITEM" it was scored as a zero. If, on the other hand, the SCA did influence the particular "Item" the respondent was asked to assign a number to that "ITEM" indicating to what degree the SCA influenced it.

The numbering system employed was a scale from 1 to 10. The scale was further divided into low, numbers 1, 2 and 3 -- moderate, numbers 4, 5, 6, and 7 -- and, high, numbers 8, 9 and 10. Low was defined to mean, "if SCA was a minor contribution factor." Moderate was defined to mean, "if SCA was an important factor, but not the principle one." And, High was defined to mean, "if SCA was the principle or main factor."

It's important to note that the number in the "TOTAL" column represents an average answer of the three partners (local special education, vocational education and vocational rehabilitation personnel), as well as the average score for all 44 local education agencies. The respondents were asked to agree collectively on a numerical response and numerical assignment.

The next column in the matrix below is labeled "RANK". Here, a rank ordering has been completed so that the reader can easily discern which programming areas were influenced the greatest (beginning with #1) and which were influenced the least (ending with #34). The rank order numbers exceed the "ITEM" total because some "ITEM" programming areas have several subcomponents.

Next, is the "% YES" column. The number presented here is the percentage of all respondents who indicated that their state cooperative agreement did influence, in a positive way, a particular "ITEM" or programming area. For example, in "ITEM" number 1, 45% of all 44 respondents said that their state cooperative agreement had a positive influence on this "ITEM" or programming area. Conversely, 55% said the opposite -- that is to say, the state cooperative agreement had no influence on this "ITEM".

The next three columns in the matrix below are labeled "A", "B" and "C". These letters represent the variety of state cooperative agreements that exist. In the opinion of the Consortium, the 17 state cooperative agreements involved in this study could be subdivided into three categories. They are:

"A" -- A comprehensive state cooperative agreement which makes clear the intention to cooperate, but offers no precise indication on how this will be accomplished.

"B" -- A comprehensive state cooperative agreement that makes clear the intention to cooperate and offers precise information on how this will be accomplished.

"C" -- A comprehensive state cooperative agreement that makes clear the intention to cooperate and offers precise information on how this will be accomplished. Plus, offers some detail on who will do what, when it will be done and who will pay for it.

This distinction was made in the expectation that the type of state cooperative agreement may be a critical factor in its ability to influence local programs in a positive way. It was determined that of the 17 state cooperative agreements involved in this study -- 3 were type "A" -- 4 were type "B" -- and, 10 were type "C". At the local level, this meant that 8 local education agencies were classified type "A", 11 local education agencies were classified type "B" and 25 local education agencies were classified type "C" (total equals 44).

The final two columns in the matrix, the two on the right hand side of the page, indicate the average response for two further categories of respondents. These are local education agencies who not only operate under a state cooperative agreement, but also either have (YES) or don't have (NO) a related local cooperative agreement. This distinction was made in order to analyze the effect of a local cooperative agreement on the process.

To summarize, the matrix seeks to answer the question: "To what degree has your state cooperative agreement influenced a particular area or item?" The "TOTAL" column represents the average response of all 44 respondents. The "RANK" order column indicates which areas have been influenced the greatest and the least. The "% YES" column indicates what percentage of all respondents answered "YES" to the question, "Did your state cooperative agreement positively influence programming in this area?" The columns labeled "A", "B" and "C" offer the average score for each item based on the type or category of state cooperative agreement. And, the "LOCAL Agreement -- YES/NO" column gives the average scores for local education agencies who either have (YES) or do not have (NO) corresponding local agreements.

ITEM	TOTAL	RANK	% YES	A	B	C	LOCAL AGREEMENT YES	LOCAL AGREEMENT NO
1. Degree the interagency State Cooperative Agreement (SCA) influenced the way regular recruitment programs treat potential participants who have handicapping conditions.	2.67	26	45	2.7	3.3	2.1	3.4	1.2
2. Degree the SCA influenced the development of specialized recruitment efforts directed specifically towards applicants with handicapping conditions.	2.77	23	42	2.5	3.3	2.4	3.2	1.6
3. Degree SCA influenced vocational education's eligibility criteria for program admission vis a vis handicapped students.	3.07	18	46	3.5	3.6	3.0	3.0	3.0
4. Degree SCA influenced vocational rehabilitation's eligibility criteria for program admission vis a vis school age handicapped youth.	2.65	27	43	1.2	3.5	3.1	2.7	3.0
5. Degree SCA influenced vocational education's admission practices (i.e. admission tests, interviews, applications, etc.) vis a vis handicapped students.	2.97	20	43	4.8	3.0	2.0	2.7	3.1
6. Degree SCA influenced screening practices of non-handicapped vocational education students for handicaps.	1.80	34	34	1.5	1.7	1.9	1.9	1.5
7. Degree SCA influenced content of inservice training programs in the following areas:								
a. orientation of new staff.	3.24	16	51	4.0	3.9	2.6	4.0	1.7
b. training of existing staff.	4.07	8	65	5.1	3.6	3.9	4.4	3.3
c. cross training in related discipline.	4.26	6	65	4.8	5.6	4.1	4.8	3.2

ITEM	TOTAL	RANK	% YES	A	B	C	LOCAL AGREEMENT YES	LOCAL AGREEMENT NO
d. professional association training of membership.	3.02	19	51	4.3	3.5	2.2	3.3	2.3
8. Degree SCA influenced inservice training programs at the following levels and with the following groups.								
a. elementary teachers.	0.87	38	17	1.6	0.4	0.8	0.4	0.7
b. elementary administrators.	0.95	37	19	2.6	0.5	0.5	0.9	0.9
c. middle or junior high teachers.	2.73	25	48	5.1	2.3	2.0	2.7	2.7
d. middle or junior high administrators.	2.41	29	48	4.1	2.1	1.9	2.4	1.7
e. secondary teachers.	4.65	1	78	5.8	4.6	4.2	5.8	4.2
f. secondary administrators.	3.60	10	60	5.0	4.3	2.7	3.7	3.2
9. Degree SCA influenced vocational rehabilitation's accountability.	3.26	15	56	3.7	2.3	3.9	3.1	3.4
10. Degree SCA influenced vocational education's accountability.	3.43	12	53	3.0	3.6	3.5	3.7	2.7
11. Degree SCA influenced special education's accountability.	3.31	13	53	3.5	4.0	2.8	3.5	2.7
12. Degree SCA influenced vocational education's program placement policy with respect to enrolled handicapped students.	3.19	17	51	3.8	3.0	3.0	2.9	3.6
13. Degree SCA influenced implementation of either due process procedures or any other petition or review procedures for compliants received regarding admission, placement or special services.	1.87	33	31	2.3	2.1	1.8	2.2	1.6
14. Degree SCA influenced the IEP process in vocational education.	4.53	2	65	4.1	3.7	5.0	5.0	3.5

ITEM	TOTAL	RANK	% YES	A	B	C	LOCAL AGREEMENT YES	LOCAL AGREEMENT NO
15. Degree SCA influenced the preparation of IWRP's for in-school handicapped students.	3.56	11	53	3.3	3.1	3.8	4.2	2.2
16. Degree SCA influenced sharing of records among three agencies.	4.51	3	68	5.0	4.2	4.4	4.6	4.2
17. Degree SCA influenced the content of special education curricula or instruction (i.e. more attention paid to work preparation).	4.17	7	63	5.2	3.5	4.0	4.6	3.2
18. Degree SCA influenced vocational education's curricula (i.e. any special accommodations such as reading levels, task analysis, open entry/open exit, etc.)	3.80	9	53	4.8	3.0	3.7	4.1	3.1
19. Degree SCA influenced vocational rehabilitation's input into either the special education or vocational education curricula.	2.58	28	48	3.8	1.4	2.6	2.5	2.5
20. Degree SCA influenced the delivery of non-academic services to handicapped students in vocational education (i.e. regular counseling or job placement services, youth clubs, etc.).	3.43	12	56	3.3	3.1	3.5	3.8	2.5
21. Degree SCA influenced either the development of new or the improvement of existing specialized non-academic services for handicapped students.	3.29	14	58	5.0	2.3	3.4	3.8	2.1
22. Degree SCA influenced the delivery of related services to handicapped students in vocational education (i.e. interpreters, readers, aides, therapies, remedial services, etc.)	3.60	10	56	3.2	4.7	3.0	4.1	2.6
23. Degree SCA influenced the involvement of handicapped people and their parents on local advisory councils or other panels or boards that impact on vocational education.	2.04	32	34	2.0	3.1	1.5	2.3	1.5

ITEM	TOTAL	RANK	% YES	A	B	C	LOCAL AGREEMENT YES	LOCAL AGREEMENT NO
24. Degree SCA influenced the involvement of related professionals (special ed., vocational rehab., vocational education, etc.) on professional committees or boards or other groups.	2.78	22	43	2.8	4.0	2.1	3.1	2.0
25. Degree SCA influenced the development of an evaluative procedure designed to measure the success of the local agreement over a period of time.	1.74	36	26	2.0	1.7	0.7	1.6	0.5
26. Degree SCA influenced the development of evaluative procedures for each of the involved partners which measures their individual ability in implementing the SCA.	1.63	35	31	2.2	1.0	1.7	1.8	1.2
27. Degree SCA influenced building accessibility in locations where vocational related programs are taught.	2.41	29	39	4.6	2.5	1.6	2.5	2.0
28. Degree SCA influenced the pooling of money in the delivery of vocational services to handicapped youth among the three partners.	4.43	4	63	6.6	4.3	3.6	4.0	5.2
29. Degree SCA influenced the commingling of resources other than money (i.e. materials, equipment, personnel, facilities, etc.) among the three partners.	4.39	5	63	5.1	4.3	4.1	4.6	3.9
30. Degree SCA influenced the involvement of other related agencies beyond special education, voc. education and voc. rehabilitation.	2.75	24	48	2.8	3.3	2.4	2.7	2.7
31. Degree SCA influenced the attention paid by related professional associations or teacher unions on interagency matters.	2.07	31	46	1.8	3.3	1.5	2.8	0.6
32. Degree SCA influenced the inter-organizational set-up of the three partners.	3.56	11	58	3.8	3.2	3.5	4.3	2.0

ITEM	TOTAL	RANK	% YES	A	B	C	LOCAL AGREEMENT YES	LOCAL AGREEMENT NO
33. Degree the SCA influenced the intra-organizational structure of the three partners.	2.95	21	43	3.3	2.4	3.0	4.0	0.7
34. Degree SCA influenced the delivery of transportation services to handicapped students.	2.12	30	39	35	2.1	1.5	2.2	1.8

NOTE: While the survey contained 34 questions, the total number of items or programming areas queried was 42. This includes subitems labled with letters.

Findings

PROGRAM AREAS MOST INFLUENCED

The data shows the following to be the top 10 items or programming areas to be influenced in a positive manner by State Cooperative Agreements (SCA). Average scores appear at end of each item.

1. Inservice training programs for secondary special education and vocational education teachers. "ITEM" #8e. Score = 4.65

2. The implementation of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) for handicapped students in vocational education. "ITEM" #14. Score = 4.53

3. The sharing of records and data concerning disabled students among the three partners to the agreement (special education, vocational education and vocational rehabilitation). "ITEM" #16. Score = 4.51

4. The sharing or pooling of money by the partners to the agreement in order to help insure the delivery of appropriate prevocational and vocational instruction to handicapped students. "ITEM" #28. Score = 4.43

5. The sharing of resources other than money (i.e., materials, equipment, personnel, facilities) in order to help insure the delivery of appropriate prevocational and vocational instruction for handicapped students. "ITEM" #29. Score = 4.39

6. Inservice training programs designed to cross train each of the three partners in the other partners' subject area. "ITEM" #7c. Score = 4.26

7. The development of career related instructional objectives for special education programs serving handicapped students. "ITEM" #17. Score = 4.17

8. Inservice training programs for existing staffs in the area of "how to" serve handicapped students with prevocational and vocational programs. "ITEM" #7b. Score = 4.07

9. The modification of existing vocational education curricula so that a wider range of disabled students could enroll (i.e. special accommodations such as reduced reading levels, task analysis, open entry/open exit strategy,). "ITEM" 18. Score = 3.80

10. The providing of needed related services to handicapped students currently enrolled in a vocational education program (i.e. interpreters, readers, aides, remedial and other support services). "ITEM" #22. Score = 3.60

RECOMPUTING THE AREAS MOST INFLUENCED

The procedure used in scoring the top ten "Items" on programming areas above included computing of those respondents who said "no" as zero. If we recompute these top ten "items" without the "no's" or zeros the scores for them would be as follows. Note that the rank order is also affected. N = number of respondents, out of a possible 44, who said "yes".

1.	5.96	(N=32)	6.	6.48	(N=27)
2.	6.88	(N=27)	7.	7.12	(N=24)
3.	7.40	(N=25)	8.	6.18	(N=27)
4.	6.50	(N=28)	9.	7.09	(N=22)
5.	6.92	(N=26)	10.	6.43	(N=23)

PROGRAM AREAS LEAST INFLUENCED

The five areas to be influenced the least, by state cooperative agreements are as follows:

1. Inservice training programs for elementary special education teachers concerning career related instruction. "ITEM" #8a. Score = 0.87

2. Inservice training programs for elementary special education administrators concerning career related instruction. "ITEM" #8b. Score = 0.95

3. The development of an evaluative procedure to measure the overall impact of the state cooperative agreement at the local level. "ITEM" #25 Score = 1.24

4. The development of agency specific evaluation procedures to measure their individual responsiveness to the state cooperative agreement. "ITEM" #26 Score = 1.63

5. The development of screening procedures and programs designed to locate currently enrolled vocational education students who might have handicapping conditions. "ITEM" #6. Score = 1.80

PERCENT OF AFFIRMATIVE RESPONSES

In the "%YES" Column of the matrix is displayed the percentage of all respondents who indicated that the state cooperative agreement had caused a positive influence on a programming area or "ITEM" at the local level. Of the 42 individual items or areas queried in the survey, 21 of them received a score of 50% or more.

Those individual items or areas receiving a score of 60% or higher are rank ordered below next to their "%YES" score:

78% -- Inservice training programs for secondary special education and vocational education teachers. "ITEM" #8e.

68% -- The sharing of records and data concerning disabled students among the three partners to the agreement (special education, vocational education, vocational rehabilitation). "ITEM" #16.

65% -- The implementation of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) for handicapped students in vocational education. "ITEM" #14.

65% -- Inservice training programs designed to cross train each of the three partners in the other partners' subject area. "ITEM" #7c.

65% -- Inservice training programs for existing staffs in the area of "how to" serve handicapped students with prevocational and vocational education programs. "ITEM" #7b.

63% -- The sharing or pooling of money by the partners to the agreement in order to help insure the delivery of appropriate prevocational and vocational instruction to handicapped youth. "ITEM" #28.

63% -- The sharing of resources other than money (i.e. materials, equipment, personnel, facilities,) in order to help insure the delivery of appropriate prevocational and vocational instruction to handicapped students. "ITEM" #29.

63% -- The development of career related instructional objectives for special education programs serving handicapped students. "ITEM" #17.

60% -- Inservice training programs for secondary special education and vocational education administrators. "ITEM" #8f.

INFLUENCE BY TYPE OF STATE AGREEMENT

In the opinion of the Consortium, the 17 state cooperative agreements involved in this study could be categorized into three groups. They are:

"A" -- A comprehensive state cooperative agreement which makes clear the intention to cooperate, but offers no precise indication on how this will be accomplished.

"B" -- A comprehensive state cooperative agreement that makes clear the intention to cooperate and offers precise information on how this will be accomplished.

"C" -- A comprehensive state cooperative agreement that makes clear the intention to cooperate and offers precise information on how this will be accomplished. Plus, offers some detail on who will do what, when it will be done and who will pay for it.

These groupings were made in order to attempt to determine if the type of state cooperative agreement is a critical factor in its ability to influence local programs in a positive way. It was determined that of the 17 state cooperative agreements involved in this study -- 3 were type "A" -- 4 were type "B" -- and, 10 were type "C." At the local level, this meant that 8 local education agencies were type "A", 11 local education agencies were type "B" and 25 local education agencies were type "C."

The state cooperative agreements determined to be type "A" scored the highest of all three types of state cooperative agreements in 25 of the 42 programming areas queried. On the other end Type "C" agreements had the least influence on first place scores and the most influence on third place scores. The number of first, second, and third place scores for each type of agreement are as follows:

TYPE "A"	TYPE "B"	TYPE "C"
1st = 25	1st = 12	1st = 5
2nd = 14	2nd = 16	2nd = 15*
3rd = 3	3rd = 14	3rd = 22*

*These rows add up to more or less than 42 due to tie scores in 2nd and 3rd places.

For example, ITEM #1 in the matrix scored 2.7 under type "A" SCA's: 3.3 under type "B" SCA's and, 2.1 under type "C" SCA's. This item, ITEM #1, is one of the 12 items which are represented by the number 12 under 1st Place finishes for type "B".

Among the first place scores for Type "A" state cooperative agreements, those with the highest scores are:

1. 6.6 -- The sharing or pooling of money by the partners to the agreement in order to help insure the delivery of appropriate prevocational and vocational instruction to handicapped youth. "ITEM" #28.

2. 5.8 -- Inservice training programs for secondary special education and vocational education teachers. "ITEM" #8e.

3. 5.2 -- The development of career related instructional competencies for special education programs serving handicapped students. "ITEM" #17.

Among the first place scores for Type "B" state cooperative agreements those with the highest scores are:

1. 5.6 -- Inservice training programs designed to cross train each of the three partners in the other partners' subject area. "ITEM" #7c.

2. 4.7 -- The provisioning of needed related services to handicapped students currently enrolled in a vocational education program (i.e. interpreters, readers, aides, remedial and other support services, etc.) "ITEM" #22.

3. 4.0 -- Special education's accountability with respect to their involvement in a cooperative agreement and the appropriateness of their programming. "ITEM" #11.

Among the first place scores for Type "C" state cooperative agreements those with the highest scores are:

1. 5.0 -- The implementation of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) for handicapped students in vocational education. "ITEM" #14.

2. 3.9 -- Vocational rehabilitation's accountability with respect to their involvement in the cooperative agreement and the appropriateness of their programming. "ITEM" #9.

3. 3.8 -- The preparation of IWRP's (Individualized Worker Rehabilitation Plans) for in-school handicapped youth receiving vocational instruction. "ITEM" #15.

EFFECT OF LOCAL AGREEMENTS

In the "LOCAL AGREEMENT -- YES/NO" column of the matrix above, respondents with local cooperative agreements in place scored higher than those without local agreements in 31 of the 42 items or areas queried. Respondents without local agreements scored higher in 6 of the 42 items or areas queried. The remaining 5 items or areas scored the same.

Items or areas which received the highest score differentials in favor of the local agreement ("YES") are listed below in descending order, along with their differential score. For example, item #33 of the matrix received a "YES" score of 4.0; and a "NO" score of 0.7. The differential between the "YES" and "NO" scores is the greatest for this item. It is 3.3. This is the score which establishes the list below for the top seven items.

Differential Score in Favor of "YES"	ITEM
3.3 --	The development of the internal or intra-organizational set-up or structure of each of the three partners. "ITEM" #33.
2.3 --	The development of the inter-relationship or inter-organizational set-up or structure of the three partners. "ITEM" #32.
2.3 --	Inservice training programs designed to orient new staff people on "how to" serve handicapped students with prevocational and vocational programs. "ITEM" 7a.
2.2 --	The conducting of regular recruitment programs for vocational education programs in such a way as to reach potential handicapped students. "ITEM" #1.
2.2 --	Attention paid by related professional association and teacher unions to the subject of interagency cooperation. "ITEM" #31.
2.0 --	The preparation of IWRP's (Individualized Worker Rehabilitation Plans) for in-school handicapped youth receiving vocational instruction. "ITEM" #15.
1.7 --	The development of new or the improvement of existing specialized or segregated non-academic services for handicapped students in vocational education (i.e., special counseling, job placement, and youth clubs). "ITEM" #20.

The top five items or areas which received the highest score differentials in favor of no local agreement ("NO") are listed below along with their differential score:

Differential Score in Favor of "NO"	ITEM
1.2	The sharing or pooling of money by the partners to the agreement in order to help insure the delivery of appropriate prevocational and vocational instruction to handicapped students. "ITEM" #28.
0.7	The development of an appropriate program placement policy with respect to the enrollment of handicapped students. "ITEM" #12.
0.4	The development of appropriate admission practices and procedures in vocational education programs to meet the needs of handicapped youth. "ITEM" #5.
0.3	Vocational rehabilitation's accountability with respect to their involvement in a cooperative agreement and the appropriateness of their programming. "ITEM" #9.
0.3	The establishment of vocational rehabilitation's eligibility criteria for program admissions vis a vis school aged handicapped youth. "ITEM" #4.

SUMMARY OF RESPONDENTS TO OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS

The initial survey contained a few additional questions which requested a narrative response. A summary of the respondents' comments follows each question.

Q. As you think about the impact of the state cooperative agreement (SCA) tell us how it has helped to expand or improve services to students with handicapping conditions?

A. There were many.

-- The state cooperative agreement (SCA) projected a formal and clear policy which established the work preparation of handicapped youth as an educational objective.

-- The SCA made clear the commitment of the highest agency officials to the work preparation of handicapped youth.

-- The SCA made all related professionals more aware of the need to prepare handicapped youth for the world of work.

-- The SCA permitted a multi-agency approach to be brought to bear on this area. It made it - necessary for each partner to work as a member of a team, rather than in isolation.

-- Each partner of the SCA became more aware of what related agencies could do and how they could be better coordinated for the benefit of the disabled individual.

-- The state was made more aware concerning the pre-work instructional needs and the work potentials of handicapped youth. The SCA actually helped increased the acceptance of disabled people into the employment life of the community.

-- The SCA eliminated duplicative services and saved money.

-- The SCA permitted the development of a more individualized programming approach. Further, it allowed a wider range of programming options to be made available.

-- The SCA encouraged more and better prevocational programming in special education classes for handicapped students.

-- The SCA helped to get the division of vocational rehabilitation back into the schools.

-- The SCA made it possible to organize additional service agencies along the common front of preparing handicapped youth for work -- i.e. social services, developmental disabilities programs, public training programs, sheltered workshops.

Q. Have local evaluations been completed on the effectiveness of state and/or local cooperative agreements involving special education, vocational education and vocational rehabilitation?

A. In the vast majority of instances no evaluations had been completed. About 20% of the respondents, however, did indicate that local evaluations had been done. And, in those instances where an evaluation had been completed a positive report was cited.

Q. Based on your experience, would you (respondents) recommend the development of local cooperative agreements?

A. All but one of the respondents to this question said "yes" they would recommend the development of local cooperative agreements. The one who said "no" indicated that at the local level such an arrangement is too political. Many cautioned, however, that it is crucial and necessary to have in place a state cooperative agreement or else a local agreement cannot be struck. Having expressed that caution they continued to say that the local agreement is the implementing agreement.

Lastly, a follow-up survey was sent to those respondents who indicated that the state cooperative agreement had had a "high degree of influence on local programs. That is to say, they gave certain items a score of 8,9 or 10. With respect to these items, the respondents were asked to list the features of the state cooperative agreement that caused this high influence to be felt locally. These features are listed below.

-- Cross trained the partners in the related disciplines. (i.e. special education learn about vocational education and vocational rehabilitation)

-- Adapted vocational educational curricula so that a wider range of handicapped students could participate.

-- Facilitated the sharing of money, teachers, facilities, materials, equipment, testing or assessment instruments and transportation resources.

-- Organized special training workshops for the partners' on "how to" implement the state cooperative agreement.

-- Provided for annual evaluations of the partners effectiveness in participating in the state cooperative agreement.

-- Required the presence of vocational rehabilitation at IEP meetings. And, making an IWRP mandatory for all disabled students enrolled in vocational education.

-- Stationed DVR counselors in schools.

-- Established cooperative job placement programs.

-- Required the sharing of student data.

-- Promoted cooperation during recruitment programs for new students.

-- Set-up training workshops for parents of disabled youth and disabled youth on the work preparation and program options.

Discussion

Eight of the top ten items or programming areas determined by this survey (see the "Findings" section) were moderately influenced by the State Cooperative Agreement (SCA). With reference to the measurement system employed in this study, "moderate" influence means, "The SCA was an imporant factor, but not the principle one". These areas are the kinds of activities or operations that seem to be basic to the expansion or improvement of local vocational education services to handicapped students.

These ten top scoring areas can be summarized or generalized into three basic categories. They are: (a) inservice teacher training programs for staffs; (b) improvement and accommodation in curricula and related program strategies; and, (c) sharing of resources and data (i.e., money, materials, support services, and student information).

When the 10 areas are examined by scores for all respondents, inservice training is rated first. However, when scores are recomputed using scores of only those respondents who said "yes" that the SCA was influential, sharing of records and curriculum upgrading received the highest rating. At the same time, inservice activities fell to the bottom of the list of ten items. Thus, for those agencies affected by SCA, inservice training while important was replaced by less expensive and more easily implemented activities (for example, sharing of records and curriculum upgrading).

From another perspective, 21 of the 42 questionnaire items were answered in the affirmative. Ten of these 21 items are also those most influenced as discussed above. Thus, these ten items not only are moderately influenced by the SCA but these same items are influenced in 50% or more of the agencies. In fact, the inservice activity of training special education and vocational education teachers is influenced by the SCA in 78% of the LEAs.

Areas least affected are not, for the most part, surprising. Inservice training for elementary school personnel did not receive high priority. On the other hand, the measurement of the effectiveness of cooperative agreements is not subjected to evaluation. The general lack of evaluations is regrettable because local personnel will not have quality information to judge the adequacy of process and achievement of outcomes.

The type of state cooperative agreement seems to make a difference. (The small number of SCAs categorized as Type A=3, and Type B=4 however, may be distorting the results.)
A comprehensive state agreement with minimum details received the highest scores of the three levels of agreement in 25 of 42 questions. That is, the state agreements which make clear only the intention to cooperate (i.e., Type A) influenced 25 items more highly than the other types of agreements.

Each type of agreement generated different responses by local agencies. The agreement with minimal specifics influenced pooling of funds, inservice training, and development of career related instructional objectives. In contrast, the agreement with precise information and extensive detail influenced the implementation of the IEP and the IWRP.

The affect of the amount of detail in a state cooperative agreement (SCA) seems to be related to needs and maturity of local programs. Whereas the SCA with least detail brought about changes in very basic operations of apparently less mature delivery systems; the very detailed agreements affected sophisticated areas of operation related to more developed systems. That is, there is little likelihood that a LEA would extend much effort in implementing an IEP or preparing a IWRP until it had established a financial base or prepared the teachers to participate in a cooperative environment.

When local education agencies (LEA) with and without local agreements were studied, those with local agreements had more areas influenced by a ratio of about 5 to 1. While those LEA's without local agreements emphasized other aspects of cooperation, they did so only to a very minor degree. The effect of the local agreement on operations cannot be underestimated.

A distinct shift in operational emphasis is demonstrated by the findings. Local agreements should, theoretically, cause the three providers (special education, vocational education, and vocational rehabilitation) to revise their internal operational structure as well as their relationship with each other. This is substantiated by the data. With respect to internal operations, 43% of the respondents said "yes", the SCA had exerted an influence (see item #33 of matrix). External or inter-agency relationship were influenced in 58% of the respondents (see item #32 of matrix).

Finally, when asked to make general statements or observations about the influence or impact of the state comprehensive cooperative agreement on local programming, comments were received which indicated a catalytic influence by the state cooperative agreement. The section of this report titled, "Summary of Respondents to Open Ended Question" lists these important influences which add insight to the improvements recorded in the data section of this report.

Implications

The purpose of this study was to attempt to measure the impact that state comprehensive cooperative agreements involving special education, vocational education and vocational rehabilitation have had on the delivery of vocational education services to handicapped students. It appears, based on the data collected, that state comprehensive agreements have exerted significant impact on local programs. This impact or influence is in areas that are not only crucial to the development of appropriate vocational education services for handicapped students; but, also, would appear to be difficult to achieve without some form of organized cooperation. Certainly, there might be other ways to achieve this necessary cooperation, however, state comprehensive agreements are an accepted and proven technique.

It is hoped that those states who do not currently have in place a comprehensive cooperative agreement will examine the data and findings of this study. If improved vocational education programming for handicapped students is a state goal, then some form of cooperation would seem to be in order. This study illustrates the value of formal comprehensive agreements.

It is suggested that those states who currently have such an agreement in place review the data contained in this study, to see if their state comprehensive agreement is performing in the areas or to the degree demonstrated by other SCA's.

Also, local education agencies should examine the findings of this study to determine the effectiveness and utility of local level cooperative agreements. The study's data indicated that local education agencies, with corresponding local cooperative agreements, had an advantage of 5 to 1 over those local education agencies without a local agreement. While the state cooperative agreement is the catalyst, the local agreement is the implementor.

While this study was designed to determine the impact state cooperative agreements (SCA) have had on expanding and improving services to handicapped persons enrolled in vocational education, it's important to note the influence of the federal government in this process. During the last five or six years, the federal government has initiated several important activities designed to encourage the development of SCAs in the area of cooperative planning in the work preparation of handicapped youth. These included a federal cooperative agreement, a national conference on this subject, several technical assistance projects and other follow-up activities.

This study helps to establish the positive influence of cooperative agreements in the area of delivering more and better vocational education programs to handicapped students. Moreover, it appears that improvements can be achieved without necessarily requiring additional financial resources. In view of this finding, it seems logical to conclude that the efforts by both the federal level and state level to initiate and support cooperative agreements have been worthwhile. Further, it seems logical to conclude that continued activity in this area is warranted so that a maximum number of state and local education agencies are encouraged to pursue such arrangements.

APPENDIX

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REFERENCES

On page 4 of this report, three studies dealing with the subject of interagency cooperation involving special education, vocational rehabilitation and vocational education are noted. More detailed information on each appears below.

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